

333.16
Y 86r

REMARKS

OF

RICHARD M. YOUNG, OF ILLINOIS,

ON THE

BILL TO GRADUATE AND REDUCE THE PRICE

OF THE

PUBLIC LANDS.

SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, JANUARY 8, 1839.

WASHINGTON:

PRINTED BY BLAIR AND RIVES.

1839.

RECEIVED

1877

RECEIVED 30 JANUARY 1877

1877

NOTICE THAT THE NEW YORK AND ALBANY RAILROAD CO. HAS

1877

RECEIVED 1877

NOTICE THAT THE NEW YORK AND ALBANY RAILROAD CO. HAS

ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY

1877

NOTICE THAT THE NEW YORK AND ALBANY RAILROAD CO. HAS

1877

REMARKS.

Mr. YOUNG of Illinois, said, in reply to Mr. CRITTENDEN of Kentucky: I rise not, Mr. President, for any purpose of crimination or recrimination, or to impugn the motives of any, on this or the other side of the Chamber, much less intentionally to misrepresent what may have been said by honorable Senators here, in relation to this all absorbing subject of the public lands, of which we have heard so much at the past and present session of Congress. I have no feelings of ill will to gratify—no personal dislikes to induce an unkind expression towards any Senator who may have taken part in these discussions; but I desire, as a duty I owe to the people I represent, to defend them against unjust animadversion, and to put some things right in relation to the debate of the last and the present session, that they may know and judge for themselves who has, and who has not been misrepresented in respect to these debates, and the course which has been adopted and acted upon by honorable Senators here in opposition to the leading measures, which, whether well or ill directed, have from time to time been brought forward to facilitate the settlement, and expedite the growth of that interesting section of the country which stretches along the immense valley of the West. Much has been said, Mr. President, in the progress of the debate now going on, relative to the attitude assumed by the able Senator from Kentucky, [Mr. CLAY,] in reference to the inhabitants of the new States, who have settled upon the public lands; and as his honorable colleague [Mr. CRITTENDEN] has undertaken his defence against the charge of hostility to the West, denies that there is proof to sustain the accusation, and says that his colleague has been misrepresented by those who are determined to have him *volens volens* an enemy to the new States, I will attempt to show, that although language may have been attributed to him which he did not use, some of which I have myself seen in the public prints, that still enough and more than enough remains to sustain all the material allegations that have been urged against him.

The Senator [Mr. CRITTENDEN] asks, why it is, that his colleague [Mr. CLAY] has, alone of all others, been singled out as the object of vituperation by the friends of this measure; why the whole fountain of bitter waters has been poured out upon his devoted head; and why it is, that he alone is to be offered up as a sacrifice upon the altar of western interests, for having done what he conceived to be his duty in respect to the greater interests of the whole Union. Sir, if the Senator from Kentucky [Mr. CLAY] stands conspicuous as the object of attack in this debate, I would ask his honorable colleague, [Mr. CRITTENDEN,] who placed him in that condition? Has he not, above all others, at all times, and upon all occasions, when the subject of the public lands has been the topic of discussion, taken the lead in denouncing these *lawless intrusions* upon the public domain, as he is pleased to term them? Has he not, in fact, to use his own expression, battled it for days together, "solitary," if not "alone," against our pre-emption and graduation bills, when scarcely a man

of his party would venture to the rescue? These things considered, Mr. President, and how can it be matter of wonder or surprise to the Senator [Mr. CRITTENDEN] that his colleague should be met by the Senators from the new States, upon the ground he himself has seen fit to occupy, so far in advance of his associates, as to have left them almost entirely out of sight behind him? Mr. President, during the progress of the debate on the pre-emption bill, at the last session of Congress, the honorable Senator from Kentucky [Mr. CLAY] indulged in expressions towards the settlers of the new States who had gone upon the public lands for the purpose of procuring homes for themselves and families, which, in my opinion, they did not deserve; and as they were repeated on more than one occasion during the course of that protracted debate with the utmost deliberation, I took note of some of them at the time that they were uttered, in the precise terms employed by the speaker as I understood him; and as I wish to recur to these expressions, for the purpose of showing how far, in this respect, the honorable Senator [Mr. CLAY] may or may not have been misrepresented, as is supposed by his honorable colleague, [Mr. CRITTENDEN,] I will refer to them as I took them down, and leave the Senate to judge whether we of the new States, or the honorable Senator's colleague, has had the most cause to complain of misrepresentation. The honorable Senator [Mr. CLAY] said, when discussing the merits of the pre-emption bill, and of those who were to be benefitted by its provisions, in the debate of the 27th of January last, according to my memorandum, that he knew of no law or principle of propriety, which authorized us to give away the public lands as a bounty to the poor; as a bounty for a violation of the law; that he viewed it (the pre-emption bill) as a license to a set of lawless intruders to go upon the public domain, and prevent its sale in the manner prescribed by law; that he looked upon the whole system of pre-emptions as a system of boundless, heartless, scandalous, fraudulent speculation; that it was full of fraud, abominable, execrable fraud; a system that tainted, corrupted, and putrified every one who touched it; that these men (the settlers upon the public lands) might, with equal propriety, seize upon our forts and arsenals, our ships upon the ocean, or plunder the public money in the Treasury, and appropriate the spoils among them, as thus to seize upon the public domain, and hold it against the just demand of the Government. Such, Mr. President, are some of the expressions in which the Senator from Kentucky [Mr. CLAY] indulged at the late session of Congress towards the settlers of the West. But it is said that he has been misrepresented, intentionally misrepresented; and that language has been attributed to him on the occasion referred to which he never uttered. This, sir, to some extent, may be true. I have seen some newspaper reports of that debate which contained expressions which I do not remember to have heard in the terms supposed to have been employed; but the inferences drawn were, nevertheless, in most instances, correct logical deductions from the premises, as admitted to

have been stated in the debate. As, for example, the Senator [Mr. CLAY] did not say in so many words that the settlers upon the public lands were *pirates*, but he did say that they might, with equal propriety, have seized upon our ships upon the ocean, and hold them against the lawful right of the nation, as thus to seize upon the public lands, and defeat, by unlawful combinations, a just competition at the public sales in the manner prescribed by law. And what is this but a charge of *piracy*? And what else is a man who commits an overt act of *piracy*, such as the Senator [Mr. CLAY] has described, but a *pirate*? He did not say that they were *robbers*, but he characterized them as robbers, by assimilating their supposed offences to a seizure of the public forts and arsenals—to a plundering of the public Treasury; and what is this but robbery or larceny, according to the circumstance of force or no force, in despoiling the Government of its property? Mr. President, we have a class of speculators I could mention, who are well known in the new States, who are, perhaps, justly obnoxious to the Senator's charge of piracy; but they are not the pre-emptioners, or the squatters on the public lands, who have gone there without injury to any one, for the purpose of providing homes for themselves and children, and who expect to pay a reasonable price for them as soon as they are brought into the market. No, sir, it is an antagonist interest. The land pirates I speak of are certain gentlemen who make it their trade to go about the country seeking whom they may devour—who visit this city, and the other cities of the Union, purchasing up adverse claims to land at a cheap rate, long since abandoned and supposed to be worthless by their holders—buying up old musty patents, for ten or twenty dollars each, to lands that have been sold for taxes many years ago, and long since passed redemption; ay, dealing in all sorts of claims, which have color enough to alarm the fears of the *bona fide* settler, and force him, however reluctantly, to the alternative of an unjust compromise, or that which is infinitely worse, a course of ruinous litigation. Yes, Mr. President, in this way stripping the honest settler of his hard earnings, and exposing him anew to all the hardships and privations incident to the life of a squatter when he first enters upon the wilderness, and scarcely knows to-day on what he is to subsist to-morrow. Sir, so much was said to the disparagement of these settlers upon the public lands, that the honorable Senator from Massachusetts, [Mr. WEBSTER,] not now in his place, who had just before that time returned from an excursion to the West—who had seen them at their humble homes, and partaken of their hospitality, rude though it may have been, felt himself constrained to stand forward in their defence. He did defend them; and in the account he gave of them here in his place, he did them ample justice. Sir, I will say no more on this branch of the subject, except to add, without intending any disparagement by the comparison, that so far as intelligence, industry and enterprise are concerned, that the people of Illinois possess these attributes in as high a degree as the people of Kentucky, or any of the old States; and that they would be as far from knowingly committing an

offence against the laws of the Union as the Senator's constituents, or the constituents of any other gentleman upon this floor. No, sir: they never have believed that in going upon the public lands they thereby became lawless intruders, and despoilers of the public property; and our whole course of legislation, in reference to the settlements upon the public lands, since the year 1813, justifies them in this position.

I will now proceed to quote some passages from the Senate journal of the last session, in relation to the pre-emption bill, and see how far the honorable Senator's course is reconcileable with Western interests, in proposing and voting for amendments which were evidently intended to embarrass the progress of the bill, and ultimately, if carried, to defeat its passage. There is something more in these amendments, Mr. President, than mere opposition to a measure of pre-emption, such as was proposed by the bill of the last session—some principles involved which I cannot subscribe to; an import and tendency on their face, fraught with much mischief, if they had been adopted. Hence I desire to speak of them, and expose, if I can, their deformities to the Senate and the people. On the 27th of January, 1838, the Senate resumed, as in Committee of the Whole, the bill to grant pre-emption rights to settlers on the public lands. The honorable Senator from Maryland [Mr. MERRICK] proposed, as an amendment to the bill, the following proviso: "Provided, That the right of pre-emption granted by this act, or the act hereby revived, shall not accrue to any other persons than those who were, on the 1st day of December, 1837, citizens of the United States; and such citizenship shall in all cases be established by legal and competent testimony, to the satisfaction of the register and receiver of the land district in which the lands may lie, prior to any entry thereof by virtue of the provisions of this act."

On the yeas and nays being demanded by the Senator from Missouri, [Mr. BENTON,] the following was the vote:

"For the amendment, Messrs. Bayard, Clay of Kentucky, Clayton, Crittenden, Knight, Merrick, Prentiss, Preston, Rives, Robbins, Smith of Indiana, Southard, Spence, Tallmadge, and Tipton—15. Against it, Messrs. Allen, Benton, Brown, Buchanan, Calhoun, Clay of Alabama, Cuthbert, Fulton, Grundy, Hubbard, King, Linn, Lumpkin, Lyon, Mouton, Nicholas, Niles, Norvell, Pierce, Roane, Robinson, Sevier, Walker, WEBSTER, White, Williams, Wright, and Young—28."

Here, Mr. President, was a proposition to limit the benefits of the bill to native and naturalized citizens, to the exclusion of those who were foreigners but not naturalized; an attempt at a limitation in our land sales hitherto unknown under the different pre-emption laws passed for the benefit of the citizens of the new States, which, in my judgment, was both invidious and unjust. And for this the Senator from Kentucky [Mr. CLAY] voted. Is this not hostility to the West? I, sir, will never consent to this distinction. Foreigners, Mr. President, are required, by the constitution and laws of Illinois, to work on the public highways, to perform militia duty, and to pay taxes for the support of

the Government; and they are permitted in return, by the same constitution and laws, to purchase, hold and enjoy real and other property, and afterwards to transmit the same to heirs or assignees, by will or otherwise, and, after six months residence, (having become inhabitants of the State,) to vote at all elections; and this, sir, before naturalization. The discrimination attempted, so far at least as Illinois is concerned, was odious and unjust; and being unjust, I, as an Illinoisian, could not have done otherwise than to have opposed it as I did. And, sir, it met with a signal rebuke in the *finale*, in the heavy vote that was cast against it.

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. CLAY] then proposed himself to amend the bill, by adding thereto the following section:

"SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted*, That all settlements upon the public lands subsequent to the first day of December, 1837, shall be, and are hereby strictly prohibited; and the President shall be, and hereby is authorized and required to cause all persons who may settle on the public lands, subsequent to the day aforesaid, to be removed therefrom."

On the yeas and nays being ordered on the demand of the Senator from Kentucky, [Mr. CLAY,] the following was the vote: For the Hon. Senator's amendment, Messrs. Bayard, Calhoun, Clay of Kentucky, Clayton, Crittenden, Davis, Knight, Merrick, Prentiss, Preston, Rives, Roane, Robbins, Ruggles, Smith of Indiana, Southard, Spence, Tallmadge, Tipton, Webster, and White—21. Against it, Messrs. Allen, Benton, Brown, Buchanan, Clay of Alabama, Cuthbert, Fulton, Grundy, Hubbard, Linn, Lumpkin, Lyon, Mouton, Nicholas, Niles, Norvell, Pierce, Robinson, Sevier, Walker, Williams, Wright, and Young—23.

Here, sir, was a distinct proposition, not only strictly prohibiting all settlements upon the public lands after the first day of December, 1837, but requiring the President to cause such persons as might go upon them, to be forthwith removed, by a military force, I presume, if necessary. Is this not hostility to the West? Sir, shall it be said to the new States, now nine in number, in this great Confederacy of twenty-six independent sovereignties, that the lands within their limits shall not be settled, until the pleasure of the old States, however long withheld; and that, if our citizens should chance to go upon them, they are to be seized upon and removed by the strong arm of the Federal Government? No, sir, I deny this right of making the public domain, as it is called, subject matter of revenue to the prejudice of the settlement of the States in which it may be situated. And here, sir, permit me to avail myself of the authority of an extract from the able and conclusive speech, delivered before the General Assembly of Virginia, by the honorable Senator, [Mr. CLAY,] on opening the Kentucky mission on the 14th of February, 1822, in a case in point. The extract is taken from the *Richmond Enquirer*, and relates to a difficulty at that time existing between the States of Virginia and Kentucky, growing out of the early settlements in Kentucky, in which many of the citizens of the latter State had, either through mistake or defect of title, settled upon

lands, which afterwards, on investigation, turned out to belong to citizens of Virginia, and from which suits had been instituted in many instances to eject them. In relation to the right and duty of a State not to permit large tracts of land to lie waste and uncultivated within its limits, the honorable Senator [Mr. CLAY] said, that "of all the attributes of sovereignty, scarcely any can be deemed more essential than that of adopting a policy to redeem a wilderness and render it productive. That it was not merely the *right* but the *duty* of a State to advance its own prosperity by the enactment of wholesome and equitable laws, demanded by its peculiar condition." Had it not been for the settlement and improvement of the country, he contended "that the lands which composed the rich virgin earth of Kentucky would have been unturned, her fields unploughed, the theatre of a yet doubtful and dreadful war waged between civilized and savage man; the silence of her luxuriant forests disturbed by no other sound than the horrible war whoop, and the shriek of innocent females, and the cries of helpless children expiring under the agonies of the tamahawk and the scalping knife."

Such, sir, was the eloquent appeal of the honorable Senator [Mr. CLAY] in behalf of the suffering squatters of Kentucky in that day of trial and tribulation which, in the course of unforeseen events, had come upon them. I wish, Mr. President, that we of the "far West" had such an advocate at this time upon this floor. What might we not anticipate from the energy and eloquence of one who could thus enter into all the feelings, the sympathies, the privations, and the sufferings of the early adventurers to the West?

The Senator from Maryland [Mr. MERRICK] has said that, in his judgment, it was unwise policy in the General Government to bring these lands into market faster than they could be disposed of and settled; that emigrants ought not to be permitted to run over large tracts of unappropriated land in pursuit of lands more distant, so long as any of that already offered, or any considerable portion of it, should remain the property of the Government. Sir, this is making this great question one solely of *revenue*, a question of dollars and cents to the old States, regardless of the rights of the new. Suppose, Mr. President, the policy suggested and advocated by the honorable Senator from Maryland [Mr. MERRICK] had been adopted at the early settlement of the State of Ohio, where now would be the flourishing States of Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, and the more distant Arkansas? What, sir, would the Delegates from Wisconsin and Iowa, in the other wing of this Capitol, say to such a system of policy? Ay, sir, what would the people who sent them here say? Territories, Mr. President, whose population and improvement have advanced with a rapidity altogether beyond the most extravagant computation, and which will, in a very short time, if suffered to pursue untrammelled the high road which is opening up before them to wealth and political distinction, have a just right to demand admittance into the Union upon a footing in all respects equal to the other States of the Confederacy. No, sir, it is not merely the *right*, but it is the *duty* of the *new States* to see that such a system of restrictive policy is not fastened upon them, un-

der any pretext, by the *old States*; to see that the *settlement and improvement* of the lands within their limits enter into the consideration of adjustment, as well as the matter of *revenue*, whether collected for the ordinary purposes of the Government, or distribution among the States, as proposed by the Senator from Kentucky. Mr. President, the reasons why the people of the West object to the proposed plan of distribution, so far as I know them, are, because it creates an invidious distinction between the old and the new States; they are unwilling that the new States should become as so many plantations to the old States, rendering an annual rent or other periodical return of the money arising from the sales of the lands within their limits, and which is taken from their pockets for purposes not contemplated in the cessions of these lands to the General Government; and lastly for the stronger and more important consideration, that they do not desire to see a separate moneyed interest in this way, created for the benefit of the old States, having no public lands within their limits, which must inevitably tend to excite the cupidity of their citizens, and make this great question as to the proper disposition of the public domain, a question purely of *revenue*, and of *increased prices*, for the purposes of distribution, so long as an acre shall remain in the market unsold. In opposition to the higher interest of the new States, in reference to the *settlement and improvement* of the country, by making donations, when proper, in aid of great works of internal improvement; such as the improvement of our navigable rivers; the construction of roads and canals; the draining of swamp lands, so as to render them healthy and fit for settlement and cultivation; the erection of colleges and other institutions of learning, for the education of our youth; by giving the right of pre-emption to actual settlers; by reducing the price from time to time, as the best lands are taken up; and in the end, and in a reasonable time, by a surrender of the unsaleable lands unconditionally to the States in which they lie.

These, Mr. President, are some of the reasons, apart from the power to tax these lands, which induce most of us from the West to oppose the *gilded scheme of distributions* among the States, which has been presented to the Senate under such an alluring aspect, that scarcely the new States themselves could resist the temptation. In my judgment, sir, it is far better for the new States, that the avails of the public lands should come into the common fund, and be applied to the common purposes of the whole Union; and if we must continue to beg for favors and indulgencies to our citizens, let us rather apply to Congress, as we have done, than be thrown upon either the charity or liberality of the Legislatures of the States.

But, sir, I have one more matter in relation to the pre-emption bill of the last session, of which I intended to speak, and I shall be done with that part of the subject. Towards the close of the debate, and just before the vote upon the engrossment for the third and last reading was taken, the honorable Senator from Vermont, [Mr. PRENTISS] proposed the following amendment by way of addition to the bill:

"Nor shall any person have any right, or be entitled to a patent, under, or by virtue of this act, without paying, in addition to the statute minimum price, at least one-half of the real value of the land above that price, not including improvements, to be ascertained by three judicious and disinterested appraisers, under oath, to be appointed by the register of the land office in the district where the land is situated."

On the yeas and nays being demanded, the following was the vote:

For the the amendment, Messrs. Clay of Kentucky, Clayton, Crittenden, Davis, Merrick, Prentiss, Preston, Roane, Southard, and Spence—10. Against it, Messrs. Allen, Benton, Brown, Buchanan, Clay of Alabama, Cuthbert, Fulton Hubbard, King, Linn, Lumpkin, Lyon, Mouton, Nicholas, Niles, Norvell, Pierce, Robinson, Sevier, Smith of Indiana, Tipton, Walker, Webster, White, Williams, Wright, and Young—27.

Here, Mr. President, was a direct proposition to compel the settler to pay an increased price over and above the price of a dollar and a quarter per acre, as the price of his pre-emption, according to a value to be assessed at the time of entry, or to submit to the alternative of being turned away from his home, for the benefit of some fortunate speculator who might be willing to pay an increased price for his improvement; and for this proposition, also, the honorable Senator from Kentucky [Mr. CLAY] voted. Is this not hostility to Western interests? I would ask the honorable Senator from Kentucky, [Mr. CLAY,] and the honorable Senator from Vermont, [Mr. PRENTISS,] who brought it forward, as well as those by whom it was advocated, if these lands are valuable, who made them so? Were they thus valuable in their wild uncultivated state, or have they been made so by the labor and enterprise of those who went upon them and incorporated their labor with the soil? And, sir, upon this subject, again allow me to recur to the honorable Senator's [Mr. CLAY's] Richmond speech, for arguments much better, and conveyed in language far more eloquent and convincing, than any at my command. The honorable Senator, [Mr. CLAY,] when speaking of the difference between land in its *wild and improved* state, said: "Land, before it is improved, may be compared to the raw material, with its improvements to a fabricated article. A farm with all its fields, its houses, orchards, gardens, lawns, and shrubberies, no more resembles the same land in its native state, before these various improvements are put upon it, than a piece of Brussels lace does the flax out of which it is wrought. And would it not be monstrous to say to the innocent possessor and manufacturer of a raw material, that he should surrender the article, uncompensated for his labor and expense?"

In respect to the rule which he contended should prevail as to the *value* of the land, he further said: "Not to go into other codes, what is the provision made by the laws of our common ancestors in the colony of Virginia, when its condition bore a faint resemblance to that of Kentucky?" Here Mr. CLAY quoted several laws of the colony of Virginia, passed near two centuries ago, providing that the true owner should compensate the *seignor* of land. He contended, that they were more unfavorable to

the true owner than the laws of Kentucky, because the first of them compensated even the squatter; none of them gave rents; and, although all of them secured to the true owner the election to take the land and improvements, upon paying the value of *seating*, to be assessed by a jury, or the value of the land without the improvements; the land to be valued at *the time of seating, not that of assessment*.

Here, then, Mr. President, we have a practical illustration of the true rule of assessment, furnished by the experience of the honorable Senator from Kentucky, [Mr. CLAY,] and backed by the high authority of the colonial laws of Virginia, from whom we derive the greater part of this vast public domain, some of which were passed near two centuries ago. And yet the Senator [Mr. CLAY] votes for the proposition to compel the settlers of the new States to pay according to an assessment to be made at the time of the entry, and not according to the value at the time they first went upon the land. So much, sir, for the pre-emption bill of the last session, and of the misrepresentation of the honorable Senator's [Mr. CLAY's] course in regard to it, and other kindred measures.

I come now, sir, to submit a few remarks in reference to the bill under discussion. It has been said that the provisions of the bill propose to unsettle our whole land system. What does it propose, sir? Simply to reduce the price of such lands as have been in market at private entry for five years, and remain unsold, to one dollar per acre; and such as have been in market for ten years and upwards, under the like circumstances, to seventy-five cents per acre; and the operation of the bill limited to five years. How does this unsettle the land system? Was not the price of the public lands reduced from two dollars to one dollar and twenty-five cents, the present minimum price of the Government in 1820; and has this reduction tended to weaken and destroy the system? Surely not. On the contrary, it has been found, upon experience, beneficial, in a high degree, to all the parties concerned—both the Government here, and the people who have purchased at the reduced price. How, then, does the proposition now submitted, for a still further reduction, differ in principle from the reduction which took place at the time that I have mentioned? Sir, such has been the policy of all the States, as far as I have understood, having waste lands within their limits, and such, in my opinion, is the just policy of the General Government towards the new States. As, for example, in the State of Illinois, a large tract of land, known as the "Gallatin county Saline Reserve," was ceded to the State for the purpose of encouraging the manufacture of salt. In process of time many of the works were abandoned by the lessees of the State as unprofitable, and much of the land became unnecessary for the purpose of the grant. In this condition of things the Legislature of the State applied to Congress for its assent to the sale of a large portion of these lands, (50,000 acres,) and consent was given without any restriction as to the price for which they should be sold. Some of them were good, none I believe first rate, but by far the greater proportion was of inferior quality. Well, sir, what is the result? It was in the first instance, I believe, offered at a dollar per acre, and

a part of it went off; then at seventy-five cents, when the next best portions were sold, and the residue again became unsaleable; and now by the law of 1833 the price is reduced to *fifty* cents per acre, and still a considerable part remains undisposed of, and must await another reduction. How is it in Kentucky, the Senator's [Mr. CRITTENDEN's] own State? Some years ago, Mr. President, I had occasion to visit that part of Kentucky which lies south of the Tennessee river, where the State at that time owned a considerable quantity of the unsettled lands, which were then in market, as I was informed, at fifty cents per acre, and that in Commonwealth paper, which was depreciated so as only to be worth about two for one; making the cash value of the land but twenty-five cents per acre; and to-day I was informed by a gentleman from that part of the country that the present minimum price was but twelve and a half cents per acre—reduced in a few years, Mr. President, from fifty cents to but one-fourth of that sum. I mention these cases to show, sir, what the policy of the States has been in respect to their waste lands that have been some time in market. Sir, it is their policy to sell them that they may be settled; that they may be taxed to support the Government; and that the country may be cultivated and improved; for, in proportion to private wealth is the wealth of a State, and its condition as to revenue improved and benefitted. Of all the attributes of sovereignty, Mr. President, none is so essential to the well-being of a State as the taxing power; for, without money, sir, the wheels of Government must stop; the Government itself would stop and come to an end. Is it right, therefore, that large tracts of land in the new States should be either kept out of market or held up at prices which they could not command in a reasonable time, purely as a matter of revenue? No, sir, it is the right of the new States, and the duty of the old, to see that these lands are settled, to see that no impediment is thrown in the way of their prosperity, if that be the tendency, under any pretext whatever.

Sir, much has been said of the parental care of the old States in providing and maintaining this excellent land system for the benefit of the new States, and of the immense emigration to the West, within a recent period, under its benign influence. Sir, I have nothing to object to the system; I agree that it is a very good one, as good a one, perhaps, as could have been devised; but that was not all that created this immense rush to our borders. No, sir, the panics have done much within a few years past to add to that emigration. What was the process, sir? Why, Mr. President, I have either read it in the newspapers, or have been informed in some other way, that during some of these panics at the East and North, thousands of laborers have been dismissed from employment by the wealthy manufacturers in a week, sometimes in a day—turned out of house and home to beg for bread for themselves and their suffering families. Yes, sir, hardy, industrious laborers, who were in the habit of working day by day for their bread, in this way suddenly made beggars. Well, Mr. President, they must do something; they turn their eyes to the West; the next you hear of them is at Buffalo, crowding your steamboats to overflowing, and

bound for Detroit, and from thence, many of them to Chicago, in Illinois. Yes, sir, in this way thousands find their way to our borders, and the next thing you hear of your manufacturer of the East, he is an independent *squatter* of the West, comfortably settled down upon the public lands, and talking about pre-emptions.

It has been said, Mr. President, that the quantity of refuse and unsaleable lands in the new States has been greatly exaggerated. It may be so, sir. I will only speak for Illinois what I know, Mr. President, from long experience and personal observation. Many of the lands intended to be embraced by this bill, Mr. President, (I admit there are exceptions,) are either too poor and unproductive to be desirable for cultivation, or are, from other causes, unfit for present use, and therefore unsaleable at the present minimum price of the Government. Such, sir, are large waste tracts of prairie land, remote from timber, and lands that are subject to occasional inundations, or are otherwise too wet for successful cultivation. I will give you an instance, sir. One of my colleagues of the other House, [Gov. Casey,] told me this morning that a case had been brought before the Illinois Assembly, now sitting, to induce action here, for sectionizing a township of land on the Embarrass river, around which the exterior township lines only had been run by the Government surveyor, and the land returned as subject to inundation, and consequently unfit for cultivation, so that it might be occupied, and in some way rendered productive. Now, sir, will any man say, although this may be rich bottom land, that it is worth the price for which the public lands are ordinarily sold? Surely not, sir: for although it may be reclaimed to a considerable extent for a variety of purposes, still money and labor must be expended to render it thus valuable for any purpose whatever. So it is with prairie lands in general that are distant from timber. If you expect to sell them, you must reduce the price, so as to afford the inducement to purchase to such as are not able to buy the better lands, and would be willing to encounter the inconveniences attending these remote situations on account of the difference in the price. And, sir, one reduction should follow another within reasonable periods until the whole is disposed of.

But we are told, Mr. President, that we have had ample donations for the establishment and maintenance of institutions of learning, colleges, seminaries, and common schools, for the purpose of constructing roads and canals, for our seats of Government, and many other purposes; and we are emphatically asked what we have given in return for all these advantages. I will answer, Mr. President, as to some things, that Illinois, at least, has given in return. In the first place she exempted from taxation, for three years, several millions of acres which had been patented as bounties to the soldiers of the late war; and in the second all the lands for five years, amounting to many millions more than have been sold since the first day of January, 1819. Our tax on a quarter section of land, in Illinois, Mr. President, is two dollars and

forty cents for ordinary purposes, and one dollar and twenty cents for the opening and repairing of roads, making three dollars and sixty cents in the whole, or each 160 acres of land. Now, sir, let any man make the calculation, and he will find that this would amount to no inconsiderable sum. But, sir, appeals have been made to the old States, to the Senators from Virginia and Pennsylvania, here in their places, to resist the monstrous pretensions of the new States, that "we of the old States are required to submit to." Sir, I trust that these appeals will not have the effect of arraying the old States against us; but that they will agree with us, that it is the right of the new States, as well as it is the duty of the old, to see that these lands are disposed of, and settled in a reasonable time, and that no impediment is thrown in the way of the occupation of the lands within our limits, and the cultivation and improvement, by our hardy and enterprising citizens, of the whole country, good, bad, and indifferent, upon such terms as shall be just, liberal, and equitable, to all the parties concerned.

Still, Mr. President, I am willing to do the Senator from Kentucky, [Mr. CLAY] the justice to say, that with all his opposition to our land measures, and harsh expressions towards our citizens, to say the least of them, that he has rendered important services to the West. Yes, sir, he has for many years stood forward a prominent advocate for that great Western measure, (the Cumberland road,) in which we of the West are so much interested, and I give him full credit for it. I have seen the monument on this side of Wheeling, said to have been erected in commemoration of these services, and I hope it may long stand there. I, at least, will not be among those to pull it down. I only regret, sir, that some of our Southern friends, agreeing with us on most other questions of national policy, cannot find it within their constitutional competency so to act on this all important question to many of the States, as to build up similar monuments to their memory and their fame, that should endure as long as this "GREAT HIGHWAY OF THE WEST," which was commenced under the auspices of Mr. Jefferson, and continued down to the present day, under the successive administrations of Madison, Monroe, Adams, Jackson, and the present incumbent, Mr. Van Buren, shall stand itself as a monument, in the estimation of the admiring beholder, to the memory of those distinguished personages I have mentioned, and all those who shall stand firmly by it to the end, in the day of its trial and its difficulty.

These, Mr. President, are my views in regard to the feelings and interests of the people I represent, in respect to this important measure of the reduction of the price of the public lands. And as to their patriotism under all circumstances, whether we shall succeed or not, I will only add, in the language of a worthy predecessor, who once occupied this seat, [the lamented KANE,] that "if that time shall ever come, which God forbid, when the sun of your liberty must set, it will set in the West, unsullied by a single act upon your borders to sever this great and happy Confederacy."